

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 2, 4, 6, 7 and 10-12 are pending in the application. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration in view of the following arguments.

In the Office action, the Examiner finally rejected claims 2 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. §102(a)/(b) as being anticipated by Schmidt et al. or Rogemont or Kneifel et al. or Applicants' own admission, figures 1, 3 and 4 of the disclosure. The Examiner also regards claim 12 as being anticipated by Grummert et al. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Applicants first submit that as claimed, the inventive filtration cassette achieves uniform flow without dead spots near the aperture seals. This is achieved by a design of the sealing zones which extend into the filtration passageways in a longitudinal direction beyond the standard circular sealing zone. See paragraph 0046 of the US application publication ("Apertures 312, 314, 316, 318, 320 and 322 each are shown to be symmetrical only about the longitudinal axis of the screen so as to extend towards the passageway defined by the screen. Each of the apertures are desirably shaped so as to allow the resin sealant to flow into the screens and provide tapering ends to the flow channels formed.").

In contrast, none of the prior art references teach such a design of the sealing zones. The designs with circular sealings around the apertures (i.e. Schmidt, Grummert, Rogemont and prior art figures 1, 3 and 4 in Applicants' application) by necessity give zones of lower fluid velocity (dead spots) in the wakes of the sealing zones. For a general treatise of fluid flow around cylindrical objects, see the attached reference - Chapter 14.6

(p384-401) in *Incompressible Flow*, 2nd ed. by R L Panton, Wiley 1996. In particular, Figures 14.15, 14.16 and 14.23 show the inhomogeneous flow pattern around a cylindrical (circular) object and that there are zones of lower flow velocity just behind the object. Thus, contrary to the Examiner's statement, they do appear to form non-uniformities in fluid flow therethrough.

In particular, all of Schmidt et al., Rogemont or Grummert et al. teach filtration cassettes with the standard circular sealings around the apertures. These sealings do not extend into the filtration passageways and hence there will be areas of lower fluid velocity in the passageways (dead spots) even though this is not mentioned in the documents. Similarly, Applicants' own figures 1, 3 and 4 show a filtration cassette with the standard circular sealings around the apertures. They do not extend into the filtration passageways and hence there will be areas of dead spots, as depicted in figures 3 and 4.

Kneifel et al. teaches membrane stacks in electrodialysis (i.e., an electrically-driven process) with plastic frames, it is not related to filtration (i.e., a pressure-driven process). Applicants submit that this is not a membrane cassette and does not have the vacuum-drawn sealing arrangements contemplated in Applicants' application.

Applicants submit that claims 2 and 12 are not anticipated by any of the cited references.

Claim 4 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(a/b), or alternatively under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), over each of the references cited above. Applicants respectfully disagree. In response, Applicants submit that as discussed above, claim 12 is not anticipated by any

of the references. Applicants assert that for the same reasons, dependant claim 4 is not anticipated or rendered obvious.

Claims 6, 7, 10 and 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), over each of the references cited above. Applicants respectfully disagree. In response, Applicants submit that as discussed above, claim 12 is not anticipated by any of the references. Further, the nonsymmetrical shape of the sealing zones of claims 6,7,10 and 11 contributes to the avoidance of dead spots. Applicants assert that for these reasons, dependant claims 6, 7, 10 and 11 are not anticipated or rendered obvious.

Applicants respectfully submit that the claims are not rendered unpatentable by the prior art references. Applicants respectfully assert that the claims are in allowable form and earnestly solicit the allowance of the claims 2, 4, 6, 7 and 10-12.

Respectfully submitted,

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